

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3018

INFO USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USAREUR HEIDELBERG

USAFE RAMSTEIN

USCINCEUR STUTTGART

UNCLAS DUSSELDORF 1634

MILITARY ADDEES FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT

SUBJECT: EX-SPD MEMBERS FOUND NEW PARTY

1. ON DEC 4 AND 5 ABOUT 50 POLITICIANS FROM THE ENTIRE FEDERAL REPUBLIC CONVENED IN KETTWIG (RUHR) AND RESOLVED TO FOUND A NEW "LIBERAL, SOCIAL AND DEMOCRATIC PARTY" AT FEDERAL AND STATE LEVEL.

2. THE PARTY WILL MOST PROBABLY BE CALLED "SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC UNION". THE FOUNDING FATHERS ARE MOSTLY EX-SPD MEMBERS WHO HAVE QUIT THE PARTY BECAUSE OF ALLEDGED LEFTIST EXTREMIST TRENDS IN THE SPD. THE INITIATORS OF THE NEW PARTY ARE: HANS-GUENTHER WEBER, CITY MANAGER OF BRAUNSCHWEIG AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE RIGHTIST SPD FRITZ ERLER CIRCLE; WILLI SINNEKER, A FORMER NORTHRHINE-WESTPHALIAN (NRW) SPD LANDTAG DEPUTY; AND KARL-HEINZ STIENEN, A BUNDESTAG DEPUTY.

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BOTH QUIT THE SPD WHEN THEY WERE REPLACED BY "LEFTISTS"

AT THE 1975 STATE AND 1976 FEDERAL ELECTIONS.

3. THE NEW PARTY IS TO REPRESENT ALL SOCIAL DEMOCRATS WHO ARE OPPOSED TO ANY REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION WITH COMMUNISTS OR ANY OTHER TYPES OF DICTATORSHIP. IT HOPES TO ATTRACT THE 60,000 MEMBERS WHICH THE SPD HAS LOST DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS, AS WELL AS 10 TO 15 PERCENT OF PRESENT SPD VOTERS. IT WILL RUN CANDIDATES IN FUTURE ELECTIONS.

4. LEADING SPD FUNCTIONARIES PRETEND TO REGARD THE NEW PARTY WITH EQUANIMITY. SPD VICE CHAIRMAN HANS KOSCHNIK THOUGHT THE PARTY OF NO IMPORTANCE; NRW MINISTER PRESIDENT HEINZ KUEHN (SPD) CALLED THE FOUNDATION THE "STILL-BORN CHILD OF A SECT". WILLI SINNEKER CLAIMS THAT THE SPD IN BONN IS MORE CONCERNED THAN IT LETS ON. ACCORDING TO SINNEKER A NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE FOUNDING COMMITTEE ARE STILL ACTIVE SPD LANDTAG OR BUNDESTAG DEPUTIES. HE HINTED THAT THIS COULD HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS ON HELMUT SCHMIDT'S REELECTION AS FEDERAL CHANCELLOR ON DECEMBER 15, 1976. CSU CHAIRMAN FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS EXPRESSED HIS SYMPATHY ALTHOUGH THE NEW PARTY IS NOT IDENTICAL WITH STRAUSS' MUCH HERALDED "FOURTH PARTY".

5. COMMENT: THE FOUNDING OF THE NEW PARTY COULD ONLY BRIEFLY DEFLECT PUBLIC ATTENTION FROM THE RIFT BETWEEN CDU AND CSU. EXPERIENCE WITH THE FOUNDING OF NEW PARTIES DURING THE PAST TEN YEARS SHOWS THAT THE HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF THE FOUNDERS WERE INVARIABLY DISAPPOINTED. IN ALL CASES THE FIVE PERCENT HURDLE, WHICH MUST BE OVERCOME TO WIN PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION, PROVED TO BE AN INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLE. HOWEVER, THE CDU-CSU RIFT, WHICH IS GENERALLY EXPECTED TO LEAD TO A RESTRUCTURING AND PERHAPS DIVERSIFICATION OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM IN THE FRG, MAY IMPART GREATER IMPORTANCE TO THIS NEW GROUP THAN IT WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE HAD.DUX

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